### An Abridgment Summarizing the MY CHAINS ARE GONE Website

An Overview of "OUR PURPOSE" and "INTRODUCTION TO THE ARTICLES"

An Overview of "BATTLING PORNOGRAPHY —WHAT DOESN'T WORK"

An Overview of "BATTLING PORNOGRAPHY —WHAT DOES WORK"

An Overview of "THE PORNOGRAPHIC VIEW OF THE BODY"

An Overview of "ADDICTION TO PORNOGRAPHY"

An Overview of "THE IMAGO DEI" (THE IMAGE OF GOD)

An Overview of "THE LIES THAT WE HAVE BELIEVED"

An Overview of "THE RENEWED VIEW OF THE BODY"

### An Overview of "OUR PURPOSE" and "INTRODUCTION TO THE ARTICLES"

A false cultural perspective empowers pornography, wrecking millions of lives with seemingly inescapable sexual bondage. It's easy to see why ministries using strategies based on the lies behind pornography fail to bring lasting victory over it. A lie can never bring true freedom. Jesus said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:32)

If freedom eludes you, reexamine what you believe to be true. The people behind the MCAG website have experienced a true and lasting freedom. If the truth worked for us, it will work for all willing to embrace it. MCAG's purpose is to challenge the lies that drive the porn industry, and to replace them with the truth, which we hope God will use in your life as He has in ours.

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Something is desperately wrong, when even the church falls prey to pornography's allure. As destructive to relationships and credibility as this epidemic is, the ministries addressing it seem to be ineffective. Why expect better success from MCAG? We're not better than others, but God graced us, independently of one another, to dispel a pervasive lie with the truth. It freed us.

Lies bring bondage to sin, and those in bondage to pornography know its severity. But deeply entrenched lies are no match for the power of truth, which is all our website has to offer.

The Bible is the ultimate source of God's truth, and where our articles quote it, we hope you will study it well. Each article can be read alone, but they are progressive in nature, building on each other, so we suggest reading them in order. We haven't abridged "<u>The Chain</u>" allegory, which we hope you'll read in its entirety.

— abridged from Pastor Ed

Link to the full articles: "OUR PURPOSE" & "INTRODUCTION TO THE ARTICLES"

#### An Overview of "BATTLING PORNOGRAPHY—WHAT DOESN'T WORK"

If you've struggled long to overcome porn, you may have found traditional approaches temporarily helpful, but not lasting. If you've tried intensive prayer, accountability partners, internet filters, "amputation," bouncing your eyes, taking thoughts captive, online courses, and are still struggling, you may wonder if there's really any hope? Be assured, there's great hope! Most strategies fail by trying to control what enters the eye and mind rather than healing the

heart. Jesus made it clear that evil comes from within, not from without. He said, "Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.'" .... He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'" – Mark 7:15, 20-23 (NIV)

We must deal with the "internal problem." MCAG's purpose is to help transform your mind with truth. External controls won't work, and this is why common strategies to control lust fail.

#### **Praying harder**

If we pray for help in overcoming a problem caused by a lie, prayer won't help unless we deal with the lie. Prayer can be misguided until we uncover these lies.

#### **Accountability partners**

Accountability can break down. Repeated failure tempts us to lie about it. When we weary of reporting it and our partners tire of hearing it, dishonesty and avoidance may eventually erode the partnership. The Bible says "the fear of man brings a snare" (Proverbs 29:25). Accountability uses the "fear of man" as an external attempt to deal with an internal problem.

#### **Internet Filters**

Even the best filters can't eliminate all the rapidly proliferating porn sites, and people can often get around them or have access to unfiltered computers. While filters try to prevent what might stimulate lust from entering the eye and mind, their external control fails to resolve the internal source of lust. They may limit the opportunity, but the problem remains.

#### **Behavioral Strategies**

One approach uses radical "amputation" (Matthew 5:28-30)—ridding yourself of what might cause you to sin from seeing what you shouldn't. A similar recommendation is "bouncing your eyes"—habitually looking away anytime you see skin or beauty. Another strategy is to build fences of protection around yourself. Again, each of these try to control the internal with the external. If they have any success, it's still not the freedom Jesus promised in John 8:32.

#### **Taking Every Thought Captive**

"We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:5 - NASB). This approach can be misleading if we bring our thoughts captive to a lie that we think is the truth. Obedience to a falsehood about the human body will only strengthen our problem.

#### Now What?

If you still feel like a slave chained to the enemy, it's time to take off those chains with the truth! The chains are lies. Discovering the truth will set you free.

— abridged from Pastor Bill

Link to the full article: "BATTLING PORNOGRAPHY—WHAT DOESN'T WORK"

#### An Overview of "BATTLING PORNOGRAPHY—WHAT DOES WORK"

No master "key" brings instant maturity in the Christian life, but on the "key ring" of TRUTH are individual keys for victory over specific lies. Even Christians can be bound by living as if certain lies are true. Freedom comes only by embracing and living the truths Jesus taught.

Paul said in Romans 12:2, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." God renews our minds as we learn to accept truth and reject lies. In repenting for adultery, David prayed, "Surely, You desire truth in the inner parts" (Psalm 51:6). David sinned, and so can we, by embracing falsehood in the "inner parts."

#### Not a Strategy...

We have no *new* or *better* strategy for struggling against sin's bondage. No "strategy" can keep us from indulging in sin, but we can *uncover the lies that cause us to remain in bondage!* 

When you reject a lie and embrace the truth, "the truth will make you free." Freedom comes not as the fruit of a "strategy," but as the result of reality! It's not a power struggle in your heart or a strengthening of your will power to avoid your sin merely for a longer period. As the man in The Chain story, you simply remove the chain that kept you beside the pit of filth and walk away.

#### **How Does it Work?**

To use the "key ring" of truth, you must: 1) uncover the lies that keep you bound to your sin; 2) learn the truth formerly supplanted by the lies; and 3) begin to live as if the truth is true instead of living as if the lies are true. It means *putting the truth into practice*, not just giving it mental assent. To be set free by truth, we must not merely profess it, but live it out (<u>James 1:22-25</u>).

Our knowledge of truth and of your specific bondage may not be perfect, but we wish to share what freed us. The truths we promote have been so distorted by our culture's adoption of lies that most people never even consider that these lies might be untrue. Dresden James wrote: "When a well-packaged web of lies has been sold gradually to the masses over generations, the truth will seem utterly preposterous and its speaker a raving lunatic." Our challenge to popular lies might seem "preposterous." Trust me, the truths we now know once seemed preposterous to us. But that was before they set us free. If they set you free, too, nothing will make more sense.

— abridged from Pastor Ed

Link to the full article: "BATTLING PORNOGRAPHY—WHAT DOES WORK"

#### An Overview of "THE PORNOGRAPHIC VIEW OF THE BODY"

The modern view that the naked human body is a lustful enticement comes not from God or from the body itself, but from cultural indoctrination. Ancient people in Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as well as those in Bible times, treated public bathing or nude labor as ordinary events, not pornographic displays. The practice of outdoor nude baptisms showed that this same level of body acceptance marked the early church for almost four centuries. A more recent example of this healthy attitude towards the body was the public mixed bathing in Japan before WWII—

before the invasion of Western ideas about nudity. And it's to the shame of Christian missions that many primitive peoples lived in simple nakedness until the "gospel" of clothing introduced their cultures to the devastating immoral effects of a *pornographic view of the body*.

In its development, somehow Western civilization abandoned its earlier *body acceptance* and adopted *body shame*. Yet, God's grace has not left us without common testimonies, even within America, that the human body is not the "sex object" defined by our distorted cultural values. We are often forced to acknowledge this mundane fact in healthcare, art classes, and sometimes even at a beach on European vacations. While we blush at nudity, we calmly use the bare *male* and *female* sexual anatomy as descriptive terminology, as in describing the way electrical plugs join. Logical meditation on these common realities could become a step away from the lie of *body shame* toward the truth of *body acceptance*.

The modern *prudish* view of the body is a *pornographic* one: they are twins. Prudery calls the body's anatomy an indecency, and pornography flourishes by treating it as such. Both dishonor the Creator: one by maligning, the other by misusing, His handiwork. The only escape from these two toxic viewpoints is to return to a godly, wholesome view of the body. God still calls our nude bodies "very good." They are still "fearfully and wonderfully made" by Him. The only way back to a safe and sane view of our bodies is to return to the truth of God's viewpoint.

— abridged from Pastor David

Link to the full article: "THE PORNOGRAPHIC VIEW OF THE BODY"

#### An Overview of "ADDICTION TO PORNOGRAPHY"

A *porno-prudish* view of the body empowers porn addiction, and a realistic view of the nude body itself is our best ally in fighting it. My nursing experience with hospital nudity proved this. Naked beauty is not the sexually enticing display that society trains us to expect. By replacing an "obscene" concept of the body with a respectful realization that people's naked bodies are merely a normal dimension of their personal identity, we deal pornography a death-blow.

Despite *porno-prudish* backgrounds, God graciously provides us with natural glimpses of "good nudity." He originally created us naked and called it "good." It was Satan's that led us away from *body acceptance*. God never diminished the body's power to attract attention. It's the best of His handiwork. Nude or clothed, it displays His "image" and can become His "temple."

Meditating on God's will for the body can rupture the unnatural and unholy marriage between nakedness and pornography. That mental divorce destroys pornography's power to lure us into lust by exploiting the body's naked beauty. All pornography has left to offer is ugliness.

Pornography parallels prostitution. Both turn precious persons into mere objects of lust. Both are selfish and degrading. In both, the interaction leaves the participants unfulfilled, because both fall short of God's marital design for human sexuality. While one may result in coitus and the other in masturbation, both begin as a fantasy and finish as defiled emotional emptiness.

Why then do people keep going back to porn? It offers only a lie! Yes, but it strategically employs one compelling reality: the naked image of God, to which we all have a divinely instilled attraction. Defiled by porn, however, that image is quickly drained of its allure, and a new fantasy is sought. So, to spur interest, porn-makers use gimmicks of erotic positions,

enticing facial expressions, and skimpy lingerie, all of which are worthless in true art and good marriages. Pornography shuns a nudity that's too natural, too ordinary, too real. A frank, nonsexual display of God's naked handiwork can elicit praise forever and can defeat pornography. This is what I learned in the hospital, what art students learn, what missionaries to naked cultures learn. When such lessons restore the human body to its rightful place, porn addiction meets its death.

If you are addicted to pornography, give up your *porno-prudery*. Jesus told you that truth alone will set you free. For a lasting break with porn addiction, embrace the naked truth.

— abridged from Pastor David

Link to the full article: "ADDICTION TO PORNOGRAPHY"

An Overview of "THE IMAGO DEI" (IMAGE OF GOD)

#### God's View of Our Bodies

A pornographic view of the body can be corrected by adopting the view of humanity's Designer. The Trinity agreed to create man "in Our *image* and in Our *likeness*" (Gen. 1:26). God made the human body from the ground (Gen. 2:7) as a Self-portrait. The plain meaning of the words in Genesis 1 indicates that our bodies were crafted to resemble God. "Image-bearing" encompasses much more than physical shape, but we need to acknowledge that aspect of it.

#### The Words God Uses

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our **image**, in our **likeness**...'" (Gen 1:26a - NIV).

Both of these Hebrew words ["image" = tselem (H6754) and "likeness" = demuwth (H1823)] are used many times in Scripture. "Likeness" is a general similarity; but "image" is always a visual representation (see the word study). This word's consistent meaning throughout Scripture should help us realize that God created the human body to visually represent His form.

#### **Answering Objections**

"But isn't God SPIRIT!" Jesus taught this in John 4:24. But God reveals Himself progressively in Scripture. What's revealed first is expanded, not obliterated, by further revelation. That "God is spirit" in no way affirms that *spirits* are limitless, shapeless beings. Angels are spirits (Heb. 1:14) yet are geographically limited (Dan. 10:4-13), which implies spatial dimension or *form*. God Himself, in describing His personal meetings with Moses, says that "he [Moses] beholds the form of the LORD [YHWH]" (Num. 12:8). That word "form" (*temuwnah* - H8544) points to a *shape* belonging to God and visible to Moses.

In many Bible passages, God appears in a human form or describes Himself in terms related to humanity. Calling these appearances *theophanies* and these descriptions *anthropomorphisms* presumes that God has no visible form similar to man. Yet, the Bible begins by informing us that God created humans *to look like Him*. Logically, then, when He shows up, *He looks like us!* The Bible never says the LORD appeared *as* a man, it simply says the LORD *appeared*.

Nothing is lost theologically by taking the Word of God literally. But accepting the plain sense of the word "image" (*tsalem*), used by God to describe human creation, can help us correct

our false assumptions. It forces us to acknowledge that image-bearing has a physical element.

#### The Impact of this Truth

- **1.** This means that the body is part of being human—so much so that God will make sure we have real bodies for all eternity by physical resurrection. Our future "glorified" bodies are part of redemption through Jesus Christ (fully God and fully human). He still has His physical body.
- **2. Your body is God's personal handiwork**—a divine Self-portrait worthy of great honor and dignity! It's beauty isn't based on the world's notions of sexual attraction but on its reflection of God's likeness, regardless of age, shape, weight, or gender. To God, every body is beautiful, and it dishonors His image to call anyone's body "ugly."
- 3. In God's eyes, there's no shame in our bodies as He created them, nor did He intend them always to be hidden from view (Gen. 2:25). In their sin (Gen. 3), Adam and Eve attached shame to their bodies. God's question in Gen. 3:11 clearly indicates that shame comes not from the body itself but is a result of sin. Because the body can be misused in sinfully shameful ways, we must be careful to treat our image-bearing with the respect and dignity it deserves.
- **4. God isn't a pornographer!** He didn't make our human form as a stumbling block to keep us from responding righteously at seeing a nude person. Since He created nothing to tempt us, He certainly didn't intend His image to be treated as an object for our own selfish indulgence. So, a man's problem isn't in seeing a woman's breasts or beauty, but in his failure to see God's design.

#### A Vast Difference from False Worldly Thinking

Thinking of your body, and others' bodies, as the *imago Dei* can radically change your responses to body-related issues. Understanding that God physically crafted us in His image is the first step in recognizing the falsehoods in our society's view and treatment of the body.

— abridged from Pastor Ed

Link to the full article: "THE IMAGO DEI"

#### An Overview of "THE LIES THAT WE HAVE BELIEVED"

In promoting truth as the only effective strategy for freedom from porn addiction, our preceding articles mentioned many lies that keep people bound to pornography. This summary of them shows how the truth renders each lie powerless in the lives of both men and women.

#### Lie #1 – The unclothed human body is primarily sexual in nature.

Therefore: To see another body unclothed is a sexual event.

**Truth:** The unclothed human form is a beautiful creation of God which bears His likeness.

Being crafted in God's image is the most significant *visible* reality about our bodies. Lie #1 obscures this truth, defining the sight of the unclothed human form exclusively in terms of sexual appeal and gratification. By adopting this idea, even the church treats the unclad body as a danger, urging us to eliminate it from human experience, except for marital sexual expression.

This erroneous belief and practice not only trains us to have only sexual responses to the sight of even partial nudity, but it dishonors God in two ways:

- It thwarts sexual purity. We remain humanly drawn to the beauty God created, while presuming that our interest is driven by lust—the presumption creating a self-fulfilling cycle.
- It insults God to reduce the beauty of His human image to an object for self-gratification.

# Lie #2 – The automatic response to the sight of a naked body is sexual arousal. Therefore: To avoid lust we must limit opportunities of seeing the unclothed body.

**Truth:** Sexual arousal at the sight of nudity is a learned response. We always have a choice.

We expect doctors to treat nude bodies with respect and purity, yet have no such expectation for those outside healthcare. Instead, we train generations of young men to be "automatically" aroused by the sight of a woman's body. Media and marketing support this conditioning, and the church ratifies it as "normal." By telling girls to cover up and boys to look away, we turn God's highest and most beautiful creation into a threat to spiritual and sexual purity.

Lie #2 has a widely-believed, widely-taught corollary: "men are primarily aroused visually." The truth is, God made both men and women to be sexually aroused relationally. If God made men to be primarily "turned on" visually, how are they to continue to "rejoice"(Proverbs 5:18) with their wives whose aging bodies become less visually appealing? Even the sexual enticement of the adulterous woman (Proverbs 7) was relational and communicative—through her words and dress—not her visual appeal (Proverbs 7:21. Even what she intended to be visual was still part of her nonverbal communication. Pornographers know this. Their photographs must have a "come on" look that communicates, "I want you." Porn magazines that print bio's of their models hook men the same way telephone sex lines do: relationally.

The porn industry wants to keep men behaving as if this corollary to Lie #2 is true, so they will never break free from pornography, never attempt a different response to the naked body, and never fully pursue the true source of sexual arousal, which is a healthy relationship. Like Pavlov's dogs, they will automatically "salivate" sexually at the sight of nudity.

As long as men believe they have no choice, they'll pursue faulty strategies for sexual purity, all based on rules to keep them from seeing any skin but a spouse's. These rules backfire and keep men in bondage by affirming that they will always respond to the nude form with sexual lust! God already told us that such manmade rules don't work (Col. 2:20-23).

God has one simple rule: *Do not lust* (Matthew 5:28): *Do not covet your neighbor's wife* (Exodus 20:17)—*lust after* and *covet* are biblically synonymous. God doesn't say what we may or may not see. He tells us not to *lust* or *covet*. Trying to prevent our eyes from seeing another's possessions only reinforces and validates a covetous response to them. God expects us to admire the sight of our neighbor's goods, including their bodies, without coveting or lusting. That should be our goal. It's the only real measure of freedom from lust. But we never get there by believing that our response to the unclothed human form will always be sexual.

# Lie #3 – Attraction to the sight of nudity (beyond your spouse's) is perverse. Therefore: We must make every effort to eradicate this perversion from our hearts.

**Truth:** God designed us to be normally attracted to the beauty of the natural human form.

Acknowledging this truth is crucial to gaining freedom from pornography. But most of us grew up hearing and believing the following two false statements:

Enjoying the sight of the nude form is **perverse**.

Always having a sexual response to the sight of nudity is natural.

These statements are backwards. They do exactly what the Bible warns against, that is, calling evil "good" and good "evil" (Isa. 5:20). Here's the truth:

Enjoying the sight of the nude form is **natural**.

Always having a sexual response to the sight of nudity is perverse.

By living out the false statements, we fight the wrong battle. I did just that, praying against my God-given attraction to the nude female form, while assuming my sexual response to nudity was *natural* and *normal*. I didn't know God could eradicate that response, allowing me to see and appreciate beauty without indulging in it for selfish gratification. When I did pray for that, He answered. Now, I no longer fear an inevitable lusting after what I might see in a day. I can genuinely appreciate the beauty of God's creation without coveting. This is true freedom.

Blaming women for a lustful response to their beauty, is like Adam blaming Eve for his sin, and inadvertently blaming God (Gen. 3:12). The right battle isn't to fight beauty, but to fight our lustful responses to it. According to Jesus (Mark 7:15,17-22), "nothing" can defile us by entering from the outside. No visual stimulus can make you lust against your will. Unless you recognize that, you'll continue to fight, and lose, the wrong battle.

The truth sets you free when you put it into practice. Again, that means, 1) uncovering the lies that keep you bound in sin, 2) recovering the truth that the lies supplanted, and 3) living as if the truth is true instead of living as if the lies are true. Before God, ask yourself these questions:

- How am I living / what am I doing that reflects a belief in the lies?
- How can I live / what can I do that would reflect the truth instead?

When you see a beautiful face or body, don't go down the wrong path of lust. Tell God you admire His handiwork. Ask His help in retraining your mind to see nudity as He does, not as our culture defines it: a sexual condition. You may need to find ways to experience it outside of a sexual context, even if only with your spouse or alone. When you know the truth and live it, the lies will collapse, and the freedom you seek will overwhelm you. This is our prayer for you.

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Click here to read the full series of articles: "THE LIES THAT WE HAVE BELIEVED"

#### An Overview of "THE RENEWED VIEW OF THE BODY"

MCAG isn't just at odds with our religious culture's *pornographic view of the body* but with the idea that men are primarily aroused visually. <u>Proverbs 5:18</u> enjoins men to find sexual joy with with their wives long after youth's visual beauty has passed. This divine standard promotes a *relational* rather than *visual* basis for sexual arousal. But is this realistic? Let's contrast the impact and implications of the traditional view with those of what we've called "a renewed view," where the focus of sexual arousal is relational rather than visual.

	The Traditional View	The Renewed View
Core Belief:	Since men are primarily aroused visually, they will be sexually drawn to a woman's naked body.	God created both sexes to be aroused relationally, not for male sexual lust to be automatic at seeing female nudity.
Godly Response:	Since God limits sexual activity to marriage, a godly man can't look at female nudity other than his wife's.	Marriage doesn't define nudity as a sexual event. A godly man won't sin by lustfully objectifying women's bodies.
Marital Intimacy:	The couple's first naked intimacy is worth the wait and promises lifelong delight in each other's naked bodies.	A couple reserves sexual intimacy for the wedding night, even if they've seen each other's naked bodies prior to it.
Faithfulness:	His wife's nude body excites him so much that a man isn't enticed to seek sexual fulfillment elsewhere.	A man's sexual fulfillment isn't in his wife's nude beauty, but in being drawn by his intimate relationship with her.
Visual Temptations:	Bombarded throughout our culture by sexualized images, a man must guard his eyes to preserve sexual purity.	Rather than attracted to images of the falsely sexualized body, a man mourns the defilement of woman's true beauty.
Personal Temptations:	A man must struggle with the modern distraction of women inappropriately dressed to call attention to the body.	Relationship, not skin's display, creates sexual appeal. So, a man must guard his emotions and use his eyes politely.
Sexual Interest:	A man is sexually eager at the sight of his nude wife, but other women's nudity can excite the same response.	A man knows his sexual excitement is found in a marital relationship, not in the mere nudity of a female stranger.
Life Changes:	If childbirth alters the sex appeal of a wife's nude body, a man may have to work at staying satisfied with it.	Having children together deepens their sexual relationship, which stays strong despite changes in physical beauty.
Catastrophic Change:	Huge changes (morbid obesity, breast loss) may naturally alter a man's sexual response to his wife's nudity.	Severe bodily changes don't diminish a woman's femininity nor a couple's ability to grow in their sexual union.
Old Age:	The ravages of age force a man to endure the fact that the former sex appeal of his wife's body is gone.	Since relationship has been the basis of their marital love, their sexual life can grow as they face the twilight years.
The Wife's Perspective:	Her mate owes her exclusive sexual interest, but how can she compete with younger women and porn stars?	Because her mate's sexual interest is relational, her own declining beauty won't have to compete with the young.

Along the way to "Old Age," most healthy couples end up in the "Renewed" column. No man can practice Proverb 5:18's mandate to "rejoice in the wife of his youth" for his entire life

without learning to be sexually aroused relationally rather than visually. But if it's true at last, it's true at first. If it's to drive sexual excitement at the end of life, it should be driving it throughout. If it must be learned when old, it can be learned when young.

The long-held traditional view, from "the Wife's Perspective," has deeply wounded and victimized women. It leaves a woman in fear about her husband's fidelity and dissatisfied with her own body's declining power to keep his sexual interest. This fear and dissatisfaction will only end when she knows her husband's sexual interest in her isn't based on visual appearance. Her hope is in the "Renewed" column. We believe the *renewed view* is really God's view and will.

— abridged from the MCAG

Click here to read the full series of articles: "THE RENEWED VIEW OF THE BODY"

#### WHAT NOW?

Go to the MY CHAINS ARE GONE website and begin thoroughly studying its contents.

If our message strikes a chord in your understanding, visit and begin reading the MCAG Blog articles....